

Pelham Planning Board Meeting
Monday, January 27, 2020
7:00 pm Pelham Community Center

Members Present: Judy Eiseman, Lexi Dewey, Leslie Laurie, Pete Wilson, Anne Stoddard (Admin); Absent: Linda Spink

Others attending: Karen Ribeiro, Select Board Chair

1. Called to order at 7:00.
2. Approved minutes of the meetings on January 13, 2020 and January 21, 2020 (continuation of January 13 meeting).
3. Announcement: DHCD will do a site visit for the 18-22 Amherst Road project on Thursday Feb. 6 at 11:30 am.
4. Karen Ribeiro came to talk about Connect Pelham. She was at the Massachusetts Municipal Association meeting over the week-end and as a result is planning to revive Connect Pelham, the purpose of which is to improve communication and engagement within the town. She will be convening a series of monthly ad hoc meetings to which each town board and committee will be invited. She suggested that one member attend each meeting but that it need not be the same person each month. The purpose of the meetings is to foster cross-communication and cross-pollination among the boards and committees. The first meeting will be Monday February 2, 2020, at 6:00 pm. Place to be determined. Lexi agreed to go to the first meeting.
5. The letter to the CPC was discussed. The revised version was approved unanimously by the four members present.
6. Judy circulated the Permitting Guide. She asked members to review and comment by Monday February 2, 2020.
7. Judy proposed the following items for the FY 2021 budget: \$2,000.00 for consultants, \$1,000.00 for staff (\$15/hour, 5 hours/ month) and \$500.00 for reimbursement of members' expenses. The budget was approved unanimously by the four members present and Judy will discuss with John Trickey at a meeting scheduled for February 25.
8. The members reviewed the new fee schedule with the additional changes Judy recommended. The fee schedule was approved unanimously by the four members present.
9. The town by-laws regarding solar installations were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm

The next meeting is February 10, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Stoddard, Assistant

Attachments: Letter to CPC

Town of Pelham Planning Board

351 Amherst Road, Pelham, Massachusetts 01002 Phone: Judith Eiseman, Chair 413-253-2932

To: Community Preservation Committee From: Pelham Planning Board

Date: February 7, 2020

RE: Request for contribution to Amethyst Brook Apartment project

The Pelham Planning Board is composed of five elected residents of the town. Beginning in 2014, under the leadership of Chairs Abbie Jenks and Judy Eiseman the Board studied, consulted with expert planners, held numerous public hearings and developed a comprehensive zoning plan for the Town Center and other tangential areas to the Town Center. These proposed zoning changes were part of May 2018 town meeting's warrant articles and took into account the Housing Needs Study and other studies as part of the planning process.

There was a robust discussion of the Planning Board's proposed zoning changes before and at the 2018 town meeting and the zoning proposal passed by more than a 2/3 vote of the town meeting. Changes were brought to Fall Town Meeting in 2018 and still others to May Town Meeting in 2019.

The Planning Board almost immediately received an application to convert a parcel in the newly designated Town Center into three parcels soon after the town vote. This request was consistent with the new zoning requirements and received unanimous support from the Planning Board.

The Planning Board is now asked to support \$500,000 of CPA funds for a proposed housing development at 22 Amherst Road—Amethyst Brook Apartments. The project comes with the laudable goal of increasing affordable housing in Pelham. If the site is "green lighted" by the state authorities (DHCD), the property will be developed with an experienced development company with roots in western Massachusetts and a commitment to social equity.

Unfortunately, the Amethyst Brook Apartment project comes to the town under Chapter 40B. This program comes with no need for the developer to abide by any of the town zoning requirements. At least 27 waivers are requested for this project from the newly enacted town zoning. The Planning Board has no role nor any authority over the decision making as to the suitability of this project.

A half million dollars is an enormous amount of money for our small town to take from our CPA account. It would deplete the account for the next three years. If granted, it would preclude most other projects which could address the need for affordable housing in town as designed in the Village Center zoning. While members of the Planning Board strongly support the town's goal of increasing affordable housing, our responsibility as elected members of the Planning Board is to uphold the zoning requirements voted by our town neighbors. The Amethyst Brook Apartments does not comport with the comprehensive zoning requirements recently enacted by the town, but rather seeks to circumvent the town's zoning requirements.

Therefore the Planning Board cannot support the CPA monies being spent on this project.